The Joyful Mom

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QUESTION:

> Would it help you be a more Joyful Mom if you were sure you were doing the most important things to grow a spiritually and emotionally healthy child into a spiritually and emotionally healthy adult?

This material has been based on a thorough knowledge of the most recent research into the relational centers of the brain as well as a very evangelical understanding of and respect for Scripture.

WHAT IS JOY?

> It is being RELATIONALLY, SECURELY, VISCERALLY connected to self, others and God.
>
> That sequence of Self, Others, God isn't in order of importance but in order of development.
>
> JOY is the abiding sense that you are not alone, even deep inside yourself, that you are known, you are loved and you belong, and that your most important relationships will endure, no matter what.
>
> JOY IS CONNECTED RELATIONSHIP with someone who is GLAD TO BE WITH ME! It can be experienced in good

times and bad times. When our JOY is strong, we can live well, love well, and endure hardship well.

SMIDGEN OF BRAIN SCIENCE:

FACT: The most important development of the Relational Brain (The Joy Center) is in the first 18 months of life (WAIT FOR IT) in direct, intimate relationship with MOTHER.

FACT: God has made the Relational Joy Center of the brain as the MOST RESPONSIVE to change throughout our entire life. It stays at the EMBRYONIC LEVEL of responsiveness – the only part of the brain to do that.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO GROW IN JOY CAPACITY!

THE JOY RING - See Handout PAGE 1

ACTION STEPS:

I. DEVELOP YOUR CHILD'S HI JOY CAPACITY!

They need to be the sparkle in your eye more than they need anything else. Your delight in them is powerful for building the JOY center in your children's brain.

Lavish them with as many expressions of your delight, your enjoyment of them as possible, in your eyes, your face, your voice, and your touch. Lots of touch.

They need to see and feel that you are GLAD TO BE WITH THEM, even (or maybe especially) when they are bad or in distress.

A Note About Badness: I think our task is less about impressing on kids the badness of their behavior as it is to help them be connected, stay connected, and return to connection when it is disrupted. We all tend not to BEHAVE BADLY as much when we are JOYFULLY CONNECTED.

I was raised in an exemplary Christian home with no negative drama. Parents dedicated to raising their 5 children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord"! But like many of us, they didn't know that they were low on relational joy.

A low-joy home will result in varying degrees of A Trauma. The ABSENCE of the conditions necessary to develop Hi-Joy Capacity. It is hard to want to be good if you are low on Joy, unconnected, and feeling alone.

II. TEACH YOUR CHILDREN HOW TO RETURN TO JOY
This is where our JOY RING diagram becomes a helpful tool.

JOY HANDOUT PAGE 2 - YOUR JOB is to help your child get from the Islands of distressing emotions back to Relational JOY. You are literally the bridge builder from Islands back to JOY.

TASK #1 – SYNCHRONIZE WITH YOUR CHILD

This means to tune in to your child while he is distressed.

> Let your child know in some way - that you see him in the distressing emotion - that you are still calm and relational - and that you are there for him to <u>reconnect</u> to – and you know how to help him to Return to Joy.

TASK #2 – BE AWARE OF YOUR OWN JOY RING ISSUES
Research tells us that the strongest predictor of emotional health in a child is the parent's accurate self-awareness.

It's not BEING A PERFECT MOM!!

Develop a strategy to grow and change.
(See Resources Sheet)

ASK JESUS TO HELP YOU!

FIRST OF ALL – He designed this whole Brain Thing, have to learn it from your MOM thing, so HE really should help!

IMMANUEL – He is always glad to be with you, even at your ickiest, in your worst bad Mommy behavior, in your scare, in your anger, when you don't know what to do.

When you experience Jesus' relational presence in your messiness, it becomes so much easier to be present and relational with your children.

TASK #3 - RESTORE HARMONY AND JOYFUL CONNECTION
As Quickly as Possible!

Your Tools: your eyes, your smile, your touch, your voice tone, all ways of inviting your child back into Relational Connection JOY with you.

It's not a disaster when the JOY connection is broken. What matters is that as soon as possible, there's a reconnection.

All you have to do is be GLAD TO BE WITH your child in the midst of the distressing emotion!

If possible stay with your child while she is in the emotion. ie Don't send little ones to their room to get themselves straightened out. They don't know how. You are needed to model it.

If we believe that restoration of Relational Connection JOY is the definition of 'straightened out' then it becomes counter productive to leave a child alone in the distressing emotion.

Return to JOY and restoration of Harmony, occurs in a connected relationship.

WHEN YOU MESS UP (and you will)

Meaning you act from your triggered self that is stuck on an Island rather than from Connection Joy.

Determine to grow your own Joy Capacity.

Apologize to an older child when you mess up.

Apologize to a younger child in non-verbal ways.

If possible have the parent with less triggering about that emotion handle that emotion.

Learn from each other how to help each other and your children Return to Joy.

Here is a great example of returning to JOY from ANGER:
http://www.majesticunicorn.biz/blog/2015/10/20/broken-things

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RESOURCES

1. *Whole Brain Child* and *Parenting From the Inside Out*, by Daniel Siegel
   WBC – 12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind
   PFIO – How a Deeper Self Understanding Can Help You Raise Children

2. *Joyful Beginnings*, An 18 Month by Month Guide
   www.lifemodel.org/shopping Books and Literature
   "Build a joyful, thriving child who has hope, inner peace and rest, confidence, meaningful intimate relationships"
   Awesome Baby Shower gift!

3. *Living From the Heart Jesus Gave You* (see Handout)
   Ch 2 Developmental Stages and Maturity

4. Alive & Well, Inc IMMANUEL LIFESTYLE DVD Course.

   Designed to help improve relational capacity, particularly by developing a more interactional relationship with Jesus, Immanuel, the God Who is With Us.

   A little more brain science (Relational Circuits) and a lot of guided interaction

5. *Joyful Journey*: Listening to Immanuel
   A simple style of journaling to experience the interactive, relational presence of Jesus.

The God Given Purpose for the 6 Emotions Hard-Wired in the Brain

SADNESS: Alerts me to the loss of something important and needed

SHAME: Alerts me to disconnection from someone important to me; someone is not glad to be with me

HOPELESS DESPAIR: Helps me stop trying something that's not working

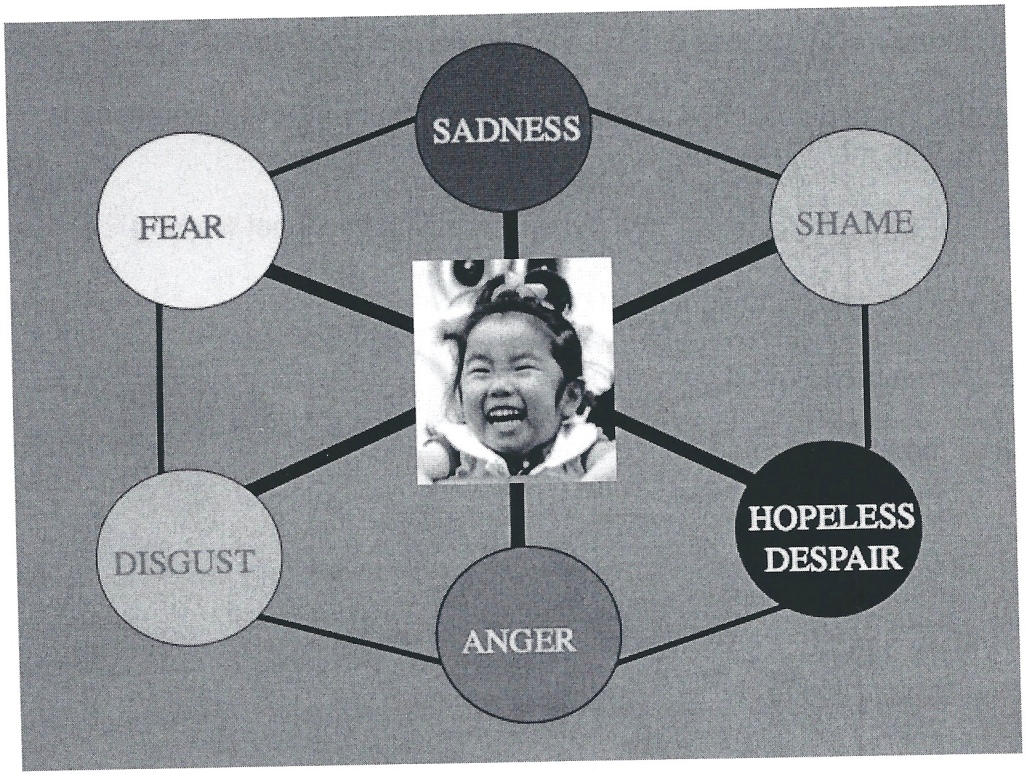
ANGER: Gives me energy to fight a danger

DISGUST: Warns me to avoid something harmful

FEAR: Gives me energy to flee from danger

CHILDREN: Are not born with the Neurons necessary to get back to Relational Connection JOY from the 6 distressing emotions. They don't know how to handle those emotions and easily get stuck alone on the Islands. Stuck means that they are cut off from feeling connected.

TRAUMA: The one variable that turns a distressing, bad, scary, or even terrifying experience into lifelong trauma is being alone and unconnected in it. The child's brain cannot process the experience into learning when it is disconnected.



The One Essential Emotion Not Hard-Wired is JOY
JOY Has to be LEARNED in RELATIONSHIP

JOY: Someone is glad to be with me. I feel relationally connected.

PARENTS: The only way children learn to return to being relational from the 6 distressing emotions is when one or both parents model it. Over and Over. In the daily grind. In the little things and the big things. In different ways at each age and stage of development. In different ways with each child.

CAN WE JUST SAY – THIS IS HARD!!!

BUT REMEMBER

We can and our children can grow our JOY capacity all our lives.
Praise God!